



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

January 9, 2009
Volume 38, No 5

Curriculum Update

by Nancy Kolb, McT Interim Principal

Happy New Year to all. I hope this holiday season was a time for your family to reconnect and spend time together. I was lucky to have three generations of my family together for the holidays ranging in age from 27 to 96!

Each year McCarthy-Towne chooses one curriculum area to study in depth. This year's focus is on math.

McCarthy-Towne faculty last reviewed its mathematics curriculum during the period from 2001-2003. This review studied how the McT's math curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and made recommendations to adopt a new math program for grades 4 through 6.

Last year the faculty decided that it was time to begin the process again. During the summer a representative from every grade level participated in an R & D to plan for this year's study.

The decision was to use our monthly grade level meetings to share information across grade levels. Each month one math area is studied. The areas include: Number Sense, Operations, Patterns, Relationships and Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability. The following questions guide our discussions:

What objectives are introduced, worked on and mastered in each area? Are there any gaps between grade levels?

What strategies, methods and materials does each grade level use to teach objectives in each area? Do we need to supplement or change what we are doing?

How does each grade level assess the level of mastery? Do we need to revise the assessments?

In addition to our monthly grade level meetings teachers planned additional professional development time during the month of January. Grade 3 teachers will meet for a full day to evaluate their new math text edition of TERC Investigations. Grade 4, 5, and 6 teachers will meet for a half day to evaluate and share teaching and assessment strategies used with their Scott Foresman math text.

We use assessment data from daily teaching, unit tests and MCAS to evaluate our programs. This year each grade level, grades 3 through 6, also spent time during CAP (Collaboration and Planning) to evaluate MCAS assessment results. Teachers use item analysis data to look for patterns and to evaluate whether we need to supplement our curriculum or change or enhance teaching methods.

At McCarthy-Towne, curriculum is an active process. Teachers are constantly observing and assessing student learning and working to enhance and improve instruction by evaluating curriculum.

Mark Your Calendar

JANUARY

- **14, Wednesday**
- PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- Scrip Orders Deadline
- **15, Thursday**
- Snack Sale
- **19, Monday**
- NO SCHOOL,
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **20 & 21, Tues/Wed**
- Early Kindergarten
- Registration at R.J. Grey
- Junior High
- **22, Thursday**
- Snack Sale
- **23, Friday**
- Family Movie Night,
- 6:30 PM
- **26, Monday**
- Kindergarten Change-over
- **29, Thursday**
- Elementary Band
- Concert, 10 AM
- Snack Sale
- **31, Saturday**
- Family Game Afternoon,
- 3:00-5:00 PM

FEBRUARY

- **11, Wednesday**
- PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- **13, Friday**
- BOX TOPS Deadline
- Spirit Sale Deadline
- **16-20**
- Winter Recess

Save the Date!

The 18th Annual McCarthy-Towne Auction will be held on Saturday, March 21 at 5:30 PM at the Devens Common Center (Marriot Springhill Suites) in Devens, MA.

See page 7 for more details!



by Lynne Densen and Kim Clark, PTSO co-chairs

What a wonderful December! We met the Scrip Challenge and the children got to enjoy a PJ day during the December assembly, as well as lots of snow for the winter break. We hope everyone got to relax and enjoy the time off from school.

There are lots of fun activities scheduled for January. We will be hosting the 1st annual **McT Family Game Afternoon**. This will be a fun time for you and your family to enjoy some games at school, as well as socialize with other families from McT. We will, once again, be offering the **McT Spirit Wear**, so watch for the order forms at the end of January. There are a few new items this year.

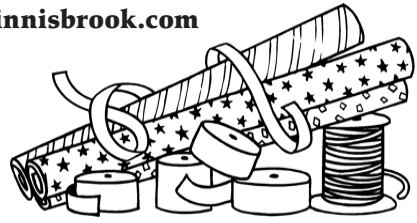
We will, of course, need help with both events, so watch for details and make sure you are linked to our school through the McTNews website. Reminders and requests for help for both events will be sent through McTNews. **We currently have 80% of our families on McTNews, but our goal is 100%**, so that we can reduce the number of flyers sent home. If you are not receiving email from McTNews, please go to our website, www.mctptso.org, and sign up on the home page (far right page).

Remember, if you are not sure about a date of an event or fundraiser, please visit the PTSO website—www.mctptso.org; it is frequently updated.

Need a gift or birthday gift wrap? Do you need to replenish your holiday wrapping paper?

Don't forget you can order from Innisbrook any time during the year and McT receives 50% of the profit.

Go online at www.innisbrook.com and use school code 105125 to place your order. It will come directly to you.



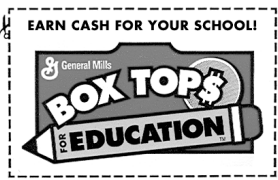
Priority Kindergarten Registration

The Acton Public Schools offer an Early Kindergarten Registration for "Priority Admission Candidates." Siblings of students currently enrolled in the Acton Public Schools who will be 5 years old by September 1, 2009 are given priority registration status. Early Registration will be held at the R. J. Grey Junior High School on Tuesday, January 20 from 9 AM–Noon and 7–9 PM and then again on Wednesday, January 21 from 9 AM–Noon.

For registration forms and more information visit <http://ab.mec.edu/APSsturegister.shtml>. Parents or guardians must also bring children's birth certificates or passports and most recent physical examination and immunization record.

Calling All Box Tops!

The second class contests to **collect Box Tops for Education** will run from **February 9 though Friday, February 13**. The class with the most Box Tops will win \$25 worth of playground equipment for their classroom. All other classrooms will win, too, with \$25 worth of playground equipment being donated to the shared bin in the office.

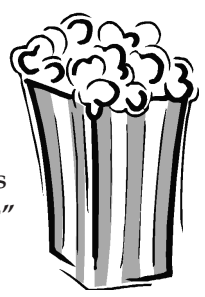


So go through your pantries and Clip, Clip, Clip—Save, Save, Save—and send them in to your child's teacher for collection. For a full list of products go to www.boxtops4education.com. Questions? Contact Maureen Ryan-Friend or Joanie Davis. Thanks!

Student Council Movie Night

The McCarthy-Towne Student Council is holding a Family Movie Night on Friday, January 23. They will be showing the movie *The Adventures of Milo and Otis* starting at 6:30 PM. Pizza, snacks and water will be available for purchase. Save the date and look for more information in backpacks.

There will also be a preview of items available for this year's "Spirit Wear" sale which will begin on January 30.



Get Your Game On!

Do you enjoy playing Rat-a-Tat Cat or Slamwich? Would you like to discover some great NEW games? Then join us as McT hosts its first **Family Game Afternoon on January 31st from 3:00–5:00 PM**. Bring your entire family for a fun-filled afternoon of games in the cafeteria—and best yet—THERE IS NO CHARGE! You'll be able to choose from dozens of great games and play as many different games as you'd like. If you find a game that your family loves and would like to have as we head into February break, we will have shrink-wrapped versions of all the games that you can purchase and take home that day.

We will also need some help with this event. A few people are needed to set up/clean up the games, as well as volunteers to help with the games. Do you have a 5th grader or older who would like to help supervise some games (explain the rules, answer questions about the game etc...)? If you or your child can help, please contact Tracey Smith at tracey@gristmillmedia.com. We will have game volunteers come at 2:45 PM to look over the rules. Our goal is to try and have a "game expert" for all the games.



Update from the Principal Search Committee

The principal search process is gearing up as we head into January. Thanks to those of you who attended our parent forum in December. It was a valuable discussion and we appreciate the feedback; the notes from the conversation were shared with the entire committee. Some of the priorities expressed were:

- make sure the candidates understand and value McT's unique culture, especially in regard to art integration and accessibility to parents
- select a candidate who will challenge McT to grow and change, particularly in the areas of science and technology
- select a candidate who will act as an ombudsman for faculty, parents and students, and who will deal with any conflicts fairly and wisely
- understand a candidate's character, motivations, and priorities, and make sure he/she is really right for McT

The committee spent the December vacation reading resumes. We are now faced with the difficult task of choosing ten candidates to interview in mid-January. A detailed McCarthy-Towne information packet will be sent to each of the ten candidates. We have written the interview questions and will use the same questions for every candidate. After these interviews, in which the entire committee will participate, we will select three finalists, who will visit McT and meet the Superintendent. The final decision rests with the Superintendent.

If you have any questions about the principal search process, contact Ann Budner (a_budner@yahoo.com) or Carolyn Imperato (carolynimperato@comcast.net).

MCAS Dates for Spring 2009

Note the MCAS test dates for the 2008–2009 school year. If you have children who are students in grades 3, 4, 5 and/or 6, please avoid scheduling appointments or travel during MCAS test periods.

English Language Arts Reading for grades 3, 5, 6:

March 31, April 1, April 2

Mathematics for grades 3, 4, 5, 6:

May 12, May 13

English Language Arts Composition for grade 4:

March 31

Science & Technology/Engineering for grade 5:

May 18, May 19

English Language Arts Reading for grade 4:

April 1, April 2, April 3

Social Studies for grade 5:

May 21, May 22

Tidbits from Tina

McT School Counselor

In this age of computers, our children love to surf the internet. We, on the other hand, cringe in fear of what is out there that may be hurtful or inappropriate for those in elementary school.

With that in mind I found a URL that lists web sites designed for children. Each site has been screened, so we can be sure it will not be harmful. The site is sponsored by the American Library Association and recommended websites are organized by category so that you can focus on one area that is likely to be of interest to your child. For example, if your child likes science, there is a Science category and within that category there are sub-groups of Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Science Experiments, Weather and Environment. Go to any of these sub-groups to get a list of web sites to explore in that particular topic area.

Other categories include: Animals, The Arts, History and Biography, Literature and Language, Mathematics and Computers, Reference Desk, and Social Sciences. There is something for everyone! What a fun way to spend a snowy afternoon in January. Take a look and enjoy!

The web site is: www.ala.org/greatsites

PIP Family Math Game Night

**Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 5–8 PM
Boxborough Sargent Memorial Library**

Turn off the electronics and come play! AB PIP (Parent Involvement Project) will hold a fun family math game night – free and all ages welcome. Come play “domino math”, learn how “Math Circles” work, discover Kenken and share your favorite family math games. See how games can be a fun engaging way to sharpen kids’ math and computational skills.

PIP is a volunteer organization of parents, students, educators and community partners promoting science and math educational activities for families in the Acton-Boxborough (AB) community. To learn more about PIP, math game night or upcoming 2009 activities such as 3rd and 5th Grade Market Math, 4th Grade Star Parties, earth friendly educational activities and more, contact David McCormick, the McCarthy-Towne PIP rep at dsmccormick@gmail.com, or visit the PIP website at www.actonpip.org.

Don't Forget to Save Your Receipts!



Remember to save your receipts when you shop at **Donelan's Supermarkets**. For every dollar spent, McCarthy-Towne will earn points redeemable for free educational equipment. Simply send in your receipts in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. **Receipts dated September 1, 2008–March 31, 2009 are eligible.**

Thank you for your support! Questions can be directed to Wendy Schaad at ws.schaad@gmail.com.

New CORI for Fall 2009

Please see the attached letter from Superintendent of Schools Bill Ryan. Currently approved CORIs will expire on June 30, 2009. All adults who might volunteer in the Acton or Acton-Boxborough schools are urged to submit a new CORI Request Form as soon as possible. The new CORI Request Forms are on the reverse of Mr. Ryan's letter and available in school offices. Each individual must submit a separate CORI Request Form, and deliver it in person with a picture ID to any school office.

Scrip Gift Card Program

We would like to thank all the families that ordered Scrip store cards in the month of December. Now that the New Year is here and the holidays are behind us, it is time to slow down and enjoy each day. We will continue to offer the Scrip program monthly until the end of the school year. Scrips are NOT just for the holidays. They are still a great way to help the school raise money without having to “buy” anything additional.

Attached is the order form with all the participating vendors. The next deadline is Wednesday, January 14th. Questions can be directed to Lynne at lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978-266-2952 or Maureen at maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978-266-2874. Additional order forms can be found at www.mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip.



Diabetes:

Understanding the Warning Signs

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in children. In the United States 1 in every 400–600 children has Type I diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that impairs the body's ability to use food properly. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas that is necessary for the body to convert food into energy. In people with diabetes, either the pancreas doesn't make insulin, the body cannot use the insulin properly, or both. Without insulin, glucose (sugar) builds up in the blood.

Type 1 (Insulin Dependent) diabetes is most common in youth.

Type 2 (Insulin Resistance) diabetes is most common in adults but is on the rise in youth.

Early detection and knowledge of the warning signs is your greatest weapon against the disease.

Behaviors a child might exhibit in school that could indicate undiagnosed diabetes are:

- Excessive urination (frequent trips to the bathroom especially in close sequence, bed wetting)
- Excessive thirst (frequent trips to the water fountain)
- Irritability
- Lack of energy, fatigue, drowsiness
- Rubs eyes, complains of difficulty seeing
- Difficulty paying attention

Other symptoms may include:

- Sudden vision changes
- Fruity/sweet odor to breath or urine
- Increased appetite
- Rapid or unexplained weight loss
- Nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain
- Tingling or numbness in the legs, feet or fingers
- Frequent infections of the skin, cuts that are slow to heal
- Darker patches of skin usually in neck folds
- Itching of skin and/or genitals

NOTE: Many of these symptoms can be related to illnesses that are not associated with diabetes. Only a health care professional can provide proper diagnostic tests and treatments.

References

- American Diabetes Association—www.diabetes.org
- National Diabetes Education Program—www.ndep.nih.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—www.cdc.gov

MCT Spirit Wear

McT Spirit Wear is back. Order forms for this year's sale will be coming home at the end of the month. There are some new items this year, so watch for details. Orders will be taken from Friday, January 31st through Friday, February 13th and all orders should be in by the beginning of March. We will once again have some samples in the lobby and pictures will also be on the website—www.mctptso.org/store. Any questions, please contact Kerry Bremer at kbremer@mail.ab.mec.edu.



Odds Bodkin Performance

The Cultural and Performing Arts Committee at McCarthy-Towne sponsored a performance of Multicultural Tales by Odds Bodkin on December 2nd. Odds Bodkin performs character voice and music-filled storytelling for all ages. His entertaining storytelling was enjoyed by all at McCarthy-Towne.

The Cultural & Performing Arts Committee shows are funded by the McCarthy-Towne PTSO. We would like to thank all the parents who have contributed to the User Fees this year to make performances like this possible. If you have any questions or would like more information about the Cultural & Performing Arts Committee, please contact Julie Greenspan (pgreenspan@comcast.net) or Francesca Riccardi (fmr08@verizon.net).

CPAC User Fees Update

We are still trying to meet our goal of \$3,500 to fund the Cultural & Performing Arts Committee (CPAC). **A little less than \$1,000 is needed to meet our goal.** Not only does CPAC bring school-wide events for ALL the children to enjoy during school hours (like Odds Bodkin), they also give \$100 to each grade to use for enrichment programs on a smaller scale. We understand that not everyone is able to contribute to this, but if you have been meaning to contribute, here's your chance. Forms are available on the PTSO website, www.mctptso.org, on the home page under "forms".

Lip-Sync Extravaganza

Mark your calendars for our **2nd Annual Lip-Sync Extravaganza** on Saturday, April 4 from 4:30–6 PM. This was a huge hit last year with about 13 performances from both McT children and staff. Don't miss out this year! We have had a lot of people already express interest in performing this year.

We will be sending information out in March to sign up for the Lip-Sync Extravaganza but it is not TOO EARLY to start thinking about what song you would like to perform, and if you would like to do it individually or in a group. Take the February break, especially if you are going to perform in a group, to pick your song and start practicing.

A few changes this year; we are going to limit each song to a maximum of 3 minutes so as to accommodate all the groups that want to perform. We will also be limiting each group to just one song, although individuals may perform both individually and in a group or in two different groups. Any questions, please contact Lynne Densen at 978-266-2952.

Ongoing Recycling Fundraiser

Don't forget the McT PTSO receives money for used toner cartridges, cell phones, Apple iPods, digital cameras, video cameras and laptops 750mHZ or greater. **If you have any of these items please drop them off.** The silver-colored bin for these items is right when you walk into McCarthy-Towne, near the plants.

If you have any questions or you would like to be an occasional helper to either 1) pickup cartridges/cell phones at the library or water district or 2) pack up the contents of the bin for shipping or 3) have a bin for recycling at your office/office building, please contact Debbie Simon at deb.simon@comcast.net or 978-263-5322.



Food Service Monthly Recipe

Yukon Gold & Sweet Potato Mash *from eatingwell.com*

The addition of delicious sweet potatoes gives a nutrient boost to mashed potatoes. Makes 6 servings.

Total Prep Time: 40 minutes

Ease of Preparation: Easy

- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar (optional)
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Place all potatoes in a large saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, 20–25 minutes.
2. Drain the potatoes, then mash in the pot. Place milk and butter in a small bowl and microwave until the butter is mostly melted and the milk is warm, 30–40 seconds. Stir the milk mixture, sugar, salt and pepper into the potatoes until combined

Nutritional Information: Per serving: 151 calories; 4 g fat (3 g sat, 0 g mono); 11 mg cholesterol; 26 g carbohydrate; 3 g protein; 3 g fiber; 321 mg sodium; 369 mg potassium. Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (190% daily value), Vitamin C (20% dv). 2 Carbohydrate Servings Exchanges: 2 starch, 1 fat.

PTSO Meetings in 2009

Mark your calendar for the remaining PTSO meetings! We meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the Faculty Lounge (top floor). Everyone is welcome to attend!

January 14th

February 11th

March 11th

April 15th

May 13th

June 10th

Come Sail Away: Auction Update Saturday, March 21st at the Devens Common Center, Devens, MA!

Here are the Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Auction Questions!



What exactly happens at the auction? The auction starts at 5:30 PM. People tend to dress “dressy, casual” or, optionally, in compliance with the theme. Upon arrival, you check in with volunteers and receive a paddle number to be used for bidding. For the next hour and a half you can socialize, enjoy hors d’oeuvres, purchase drinks from the cash bar, and bid on the silent auction items. By 7:00 PM, the silent auction is closed and everyone enjoys a sit down dinner with open seating. At 8 PM, the live auction begins and dessert and coffee are served. The auction is finished when the last live auction item is purchased. Before leaving, you pay for and receive the items that you successfully bid on. You may pay using a check or credit card!

Why do people make such a big deal about the auction? Last year, the money raised by the auction was used to fully or partially fund the classroom assistants, computer lab assistants, reading assistants, library assistant, arts/humanities consultant, Sloyd position and Parent Involvement/Community Outreach Coordinator. People make such a big deal about the auction because the funds, more than ever, are needed to help make our children’s educations be the best that they can be!

How does the silent auction work? The majority of items donated are bid on during the silent auction. The items are each displayed with a bid sheet on numerous tables. If you are interested in bidding on a particular item, write down your paddle number and bid price on the bid sheet. Ideally, other people are interested in the same item and then increase the bid price. This process continues until it is announced that the silent auction tables are closing. Only one table is closed at a time allowing people to get their final bids in on items that they just can’t go home without! The great thing about the auction is that it gives people an opportunity to purchase items they normally would (i.e. gift certificates to favorite restaurants, stores, museum memberships, services) and the school benefits financially.

How does the live auction work? After dinner, the auctioneer begins the live auction. Items saved for the live auction include all the wonderful classroom projects made by the children, as well as items which the auction committee believes will generate generous donations. The item up for bid is described and displayed and then the auctioneer starts the bidding process with an opening bid. To purchase the item at the stated price, you raise your paddle. The auctioneer then raises the bid and hopefully other interested people raise their paddles. This process continues until only one person is left bidding and their last bid becomes the final price. Even if you’re not bidding on an item, it’s fun to watch the bidding process!

If I can’t attend the auction, can I still bid on items? Yes! You can bid by proxy. Look for instructions in the Auction Booklet that is sent home with your child a week before the auction. You can also fill out the form online—www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2008.

What are the raffle tickets all about? The raffle tickets are an additional fundraising effort associated with the auction. Each student receives two booklets of tickets and is encouraged but not obligated to sell the tickets. Students can sell more tickets if they choose. The school community also sells tickets to the public at Roche Bros. and Donelan’s supermarkets during the January/February time frame. Families volunteer to sell tickets for an hour or two. Items raffled last year included Red Sox Tickets and an iPod!

OK, you’ve inspired me! What can I do to help? We’re glad you asked! We’ve had a great response from parents who have already filled lots of needed positions. We always need more help. To find out more and fill out an information form visit www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2008. If you have any questions, please call Carolyn Imperato, 978-264-9982 or Susan Lerner, 978-263-0045. Thank you from the Auction Committee.

McCarthy-Towne School – JANUARY 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			Scrip Orders Due PTSO Meeting, PDB Faculty Room 7 PM	Snack Sale		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	NO SCHOOL Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Early Kindergarten Registration at R.J. Grey Junior High	Early Kindergarten Registration at R.J. Grey Junior High	Snack Sale	Family Movie Night 6:30 PM	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Kindergarten Change-over			Elementary Band Concert, 10 AM Snack Sale		Family Game Afternoon 3:00–5:00 PM
FEBRUARY 1	FEBRUARY 2	FEBRUARY 3	FEBRUARY 4	FEBRUARY 5	FEBRUARY 6	FEBRUARY 7
				Snack Sale	February MCT Bulletin in Backpacks	